

He has helped raise funds for local youth programs, establish drug education and prevention programs, and raise scholarship funds for underprivileged students. He has also developed youth leadership training seminars and established a youth education program assisting children with their reading skills. He contributes to various local and state policy boards regarding important issues such as education, immigration and redistricting.

Mr. Fimbres' standing as a community leader is evident by the respect and recognition he receives and for his countless hours of work on behalf of his community. Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join me in recognizing this outstanding citizen and role model whom I am also proud to call my friend.

**A TRIBUTE TO ALICIA CONTRERAS  
OF SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA**

**HON. TOM LANTOS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 12, 2002*

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Alicia Contreras of San Francisco, California for receiving the Paul G. Hearne American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) Leadership Award for 2001. Alicia, herself disabled, is an inspiration to thousands of disabled individuals, and has been providing them valuable assistance through various organizations since 1994. The American Association of People with Disabilities, an outstanding organization founded by cross-disability leaders in 1995, has made an excellent choice in selecting Alicia Contreras as one the recipients of the Paul G. Hearne award.

Mr. Speaker, Alicia Contreras' work for the disabled has touched the lives of many individuals by demonstrating that being disabled does not have to get in the way of enjoying life. Alicia, herself confined to a wheelchair, learned how to improve her life as she began to work for the disabled in 1994 at a one-month leadership training program sponsored by Mobility International USA. Through this experience she learned that even with a wheelchair she could play sports, dance, and live an independent life. Through this experience, she learned, in effect, how to overcome her disability.

Mr. Speaker, after realizing that she had the power to take control of her life, Alicia Contreras founded the Independent Living Center for Women with Disabilities in San Luis Potosi, Mexico, so she could help other disabled women realize what she had learned. Alicia showed women, wheelchair bound like her, that being in a wheelchair does not mean one has to live in seclusion in one's own home, and that one could live a more independent life outside the home.

After her efforts through the Independent Living Center, Alicia took on a newly created government position, Program Coordinator for People with Disabilities in San Luis Potosi, Mexico. While there, Alicia created the first-ever accessible taxi-van service in the state, awarded more than 700 scholarships to disabled people, and provided more than 1,000 hearing aids and 300 wheelchairs to the disability community.

Through this work, Alicia became familiar with Whirlwind Women, an international orga-

nization that teaches women with disabilities how to build appropriate wheelchairs for themselves and others. In November of 2000, Alicia was hired as the Whirlwind Women Program Director and continues to serve in that capacity.

Mr. Speaker, Alicia Contreras has made a valuable contribution to the disabled community; the American Association of People with Disabilities has made an intelligent choice in selecting her as one of the recipients of this award.

Like Alicia, the AAPD is committed to improving the lives of people with disabilities. Founded by disabled individuals, AAPD is committed to promoting the economic and political empowerment of all people with disabilities, educating businesses and the general public about disability issues, and seeing through the full implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act so that all disabled individuals may have an equal opportunity to fully participate in society.

Mr. Speaker, with these goals in mind, it is no surprise that AAPD selected Alicia. She exemplifies the dedication and determination necessary to give disabled people a fair chance in life, and most importantly, she gives them hope. I invite my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Alicia Contreras for receiving the Paul G. Hearne/AAPD Leadership Award.

**PAYING TRIBUTE TO NOEL  
CUNNINGHAM**

**HON. SCOTT MCINNIS**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 12, 2002*

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to pay tribute to a man whose life-long pursuit of improving and enriching the lives of others is an inspiration to us all. Noel Cunningham has dedicated his life to improving the lives of his fellow man. In recognition of this, the Ancient Order of the Hibernians is honoring Noel as Humanitarian of the Year. Although Noel bases his philanthropy in Denver his kindness and generosity have extended far beyond Denver to touch the lives of people around the state, the nation and indeed the world.

It would take hours to describe all that Noel has done for the Denver Community, however, certain projects of his stand out. Noel was one of the founders of Taste of the Nation, an incredibly successful program that raises money to help address hunger and poverty. Last year the event was held in 500 cities across the nation and raised \$300,000 in Denver alone. The millions of dollars that were raised will be distributed to states and countries dealing with the issue of hunger. For ten years, Noel has also run an event called "I Remember Mama" in which every Mother's Day he opens the doors of his restaurant to women from the poorest districts of Denver who participate in the Meals on Wheels programs. All of these women, who are without family in the Denver area, are treated to an incredible brunch, roses, gifts and music. Every Christmas, for the past decade, Noel has also hosted 300 foster children for a holiday party complete with food, gifts and a Santa who arrives in a helicopter.

Not only do Noel's efforts benefit individuals, they also have a tremendous impact on the community at large. Last year, Noel helped to raise a half-million dollars to build a brand new playground for the children of Garden Place Academy in Globeville, one of Denver's poorest districts. The playground was built with help from the surrounding community and by the students themselves. As a result, less than one year later, the discipline problem at the school has been nearly cut in half. Noel hopes to share his passion for helping others with the next generation through his Quarters for Kids program, where school children save a quarter so that someone else can have a meal. Thousands of children participate every year learning the joy of giving to others.

Mr. Speaker, I can think of no one more deserving of this award than Noel Cunningham. He is a man of unparalleled dedication and commitment to both his professional and philanthropic endeavors. It is his unrelenting passion for each and every thing he does, as well as his spirit of honesty and integrity with which he has always conducted himself that I wish to bring before this body of Congress. Noel Cunningham is a remarkable man, who has achieved extraordinary things in his career and in his community. It is my distinct pleasure to pay tribute to Noel Cunningham today, and wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

**HONORING JOHN L. HUERTA AS AN  
OUTSTANDING MEMBER OF THE  
TUCSON AND SOUTH ARIZONA  
COMMUNITY**

**HON. ED PASTOR**

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 12, 2002*

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate an outstanding member of the Tucson and Southern Arizona community. Mr. John L. Huerta. John has always served his community and his country with distinction, and although he has traveled extensively and held important positions at the national and state level, he has remained El Tucsonese at heart. On March 22, 2002, the University of Arizona Hispanic Alumni Association and the Concerned Media Professionals will gather to applaud and honor John for his many contributions to the cultural and educational vitality of the greater Tucson area. Today I join his family, friends and colleagues in expressing my sincere admiration for his many accomplishments.

John was born in Tucson, Arizona, and graduated from Tucson High and the University of Arizona. While at the U of A, John co-founded the Los Universitarios, a social club for the university Hispanic community, which fostered many of today's innovative leaders in Tucson. After college, John worked as a Juvenile Probation officer and then joined a task force that was successful in bringing the "War on Poverty" programs to Tucson. John's effective leadership in these programs brought him to the attention of national leaders who encouraged him to relocate to Washington, DC, where he joined the staff of the Postmaster General as a Special Assistant.

John's career in Washington, DC, moved upward through several positions in the Department of Health Education, and Welfare, including Assistant Director of the Office for